

The Frederick and Jan Mayer Center for Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art
at the Denver Art Museum presents

Cuernavaca, Mexico: Art, History and Language

March 13-22, 2010

PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

A study tour of Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial sites in Cuernavaca
and the surrounding region with Dr. Donna Pierce



Catedral de Santa Prisca, Taxco



Pyramid Relief, Xochicalco

The Mayer Center Study Tour 2010 will include slide lectures by Dr. Donna Pierce and guest scholars. If there is sufficient interest, Spanish classes and Spanish language *tertulias* (conversations) will be taught by Jaime Gavin throughout the trip. Rosa Ramírez Carlson will serve as tour director.

Day One (Saturday, March 13)

Travel to **Cuernavaca**. Leave Denver at 7:50 am on Continental to Houston, arrive Mexico City at 2:25 pm. Transfer to private coach for a beautiful drive through the mountains to Cuernavaca. Welcome cocktail party hosted by the Mayer Center and dinner in hotel restaurant. **D**

Day Two (Sunday, March 14)

Morning visit to the **Cathedral of Cuernavaca** and Franciscan Monastery built between c. 1525-55. The interior of church has wall murals depicting the 1597 martyrdom in Japan of Mexican-born Franciscan St. Felipe de Jesus and his 26 companions, some Japanese Christians. We will visit the open chapel in church yard. Monastery also has elaborate wall paintings and a Baroque altar screen. Next we will visit the **Regional Museum of Cuauhnahuac** located in the former **Palace of Cortes**. This home with loggias was built for Cortes (c. 1530s) in the early Renaissance style used in southern Spain and recalls palaces in Spain (particularly in the towns of Úbeda, Jaen and Toledo). This is probably the oldest extant secular building of colonial Mexico. It was built over ruins of the local Pre-Columbian Tlahaica ceremonial site. It now houses displays of archaeological material as well as colonial armor, painting, decorative arts, and luxury goods imported from Asia on the famous Manila galleons. We will see wonderful examples of Mexican

lacquer ware done in imitation of Japanese arts, especially a large secretary. Lunch on your own in Cuernavaca. Afternoon will include free time as well as Spanish classes and art lectures. Evening tertulia. Band concert on the plaza at 6:00 pm (see below). **B**

Day Three (Monday, March 15)

Morning trip to the Pre-Columbian ruins of **Xochicalco**, a late Classic/early Post-Classic site that flourished 700-900 AD and was abandoned in the 10th c. Like Cacaxtla (which many of us saw in Tlaxcala), Xochimilco was probably a large independent city and trade center on the route between Teotihuacan and the Mayan areas. It shows evidence of international artistic influence from both as well as from Zapotec Monte Alban in Oaxaca and El Tajín on the east coast. Some evidence indicates that Xochicalco hosted an international symposium in the 7th century to study astronomy and to coordinate calendars between the various Meso-American cultures. Highlights of the large site include a grand plaza, causeways, pyramids, stelae, cisterns, steam baths, an observatory, a large ballcourt, underground chambers with fresco paintings, and large relief carvings depicting various animals including toucans, bats, as well as Quetzalcoatl and Maya-like seated figures. We will have a local guide. Lunch a few miles further south on the main highway at Ex-Hacienda de San José Vista Hermosa, the former **hacienda of Hernán Cortés**. Granted to him by the king in 1529, the former sugar plantation is now a hotel with lovely gardens and a small museum. After lunch we will return to Cuernavaca for an afternoon of free time, Spanish and art classes. Evening tertulia. **B, L**

Day Four (Tuesday, March 16)

All day trip to **Taxco**. Visit the elaborate 18th century Baroque church (1748-58) built at the expense of wealthy miner José de la Borda. While building the church, his famous saying was “Dios da a Borda; Borda da a Dios (God gives to Borda; Borda gives to God)”. On the interior the altar screens were designed by Isidro de Balbás, the adopted Mexican son of Jerónimo Balbás, a Spaniard who came to Mexico to build the Altar of the Kings in Mexico City Cathedral, and never left. The paintings in the altar screens are by Miguel Cabrera (the DAM/Mayer collection has several paintings by him including the large Birth of the Virgin on the 4th floor). After lunch on your own, we will visit the **Museum of Colonial Art** (Museo de Arte Virreinal), housed in a late 18th -c. mansion where the German explorer Baron Alexander Von Humboldt stayed in April 1803 toward the end of his travels through Latin America. If time allows, we might visit the **Cultural Center of Taxco**, housed in a portion of the former home of José de la Borda, and including a contemporary art museum and/or the Spratling Museum, former home of the American William Spratling who revived Taxco’s silver making industry in the early 20th century. The museum now houses a small portion of his Pre-Columbian collection (most of the collection was given to the Anthropology Museum in Mexico City). Free time to walk around the lovely colonial town and visit famous Taxco silver shops. Return to Cuernavaca. Late afternoon Spanish classes and/or tertulia. **B**

Day Five (Wednesday, March 17)

Morning classes. Lunch on your own. Afternoon visit to Robert Brady Museum in the former private home of Art Institute of Chicago-graduate. Collection includes assortment of painting, sculpture, antique furniture, ceramics, and tapestries in a restored colonial mansion. Afterwards we will visit the Borda Gardens. This country mansion with surrounding grounds was inherited by Manuel de la Borda, son of the famous miner of Taxco, José de la Borda. Manuel turned it into a botanical garden and park with a lake c. 1783. Maximilian and Carlota used it as their country home. Rest of afternoon free. Evening tertulia. **B**

Day Six (Thursday, March 18)

Bus trip to visit the Pre-Columbian ruins at **Malinalco**. Originally a Matlazinca site conquered by the Aztecs in 1470s. Beginning in 1501 it was converted into a sanctuary and religious retreat for the Knights of Jaguars and Eagles from the Aztec capitol of Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City). The famous wooden drum with the Eagle on the side was found here after the Spanish conquest (now in National Museum of Anthropology). Much of the site is actually carved out of the cliff rather than constructed and includes six main buildings, many with relief carvings in the rock walls. The main temple is circular with the mouth of a serpent carved around the doorway and carvings of Eagle and Jaguar Knights around the walls. Next we will visit the town of **Malinalco** with its Franciscan mission church and convent founded 1541; church completed by 1571. We will see the large fortress-like church with tree-filled atrium. The fantastic frescoes of flora and fauna in the convent are filled with native iconography. If time allows after our group lunch in Malinalco, we will visit the town of **Chalma**, a Pre-Columbian pilgrimage site appropriated in the colonial period. There is a famous miraculous statue of Christ on the Cross, known as the Christ of Chalma. It remains a pilgrimage site today. Return to Cuernavaca. Late afternoon Spanish classes and/or tertulia. Free band concert on plaza at 6:00 pm (see below). **B, L**

Day Seven (Friday, March 19)

Morning classes. Free afternoon in Cuernavaca. Evening tertulia. **B**

Day Eight (Saturday, March 20)

Visit small village of **Tepotzlán**. Stop at Dominican Mission Church and Monastery founded c. 1556; church completed c. 1588. Atrium had small posa chapels in the corners similar to ones we have seen elsewhere. Church has wonderfully carved façade with Indianate interpretation of Renaissance elements. Convent now houses a PreColumbian art museum. On the hillside above Tepotzlán, we will visit the Pre-Columbian site of **Tepozteco**, originally built by the native Tlahuica culture of the valley. After they were conquered by the Aztecs, it was rebuilt as an Aztec shrine. Site includes a tiered pyramid topped by a temple with elaborate relief carving as well as the remains of a small ballcourt and annex buildings. Lunch in Tepotzlán at El Ciruelo or Restaurant Axitla. After lunch we will make a short drive to the village of **Yecapixtla** where we will visit the 16th c. Augustinian Mission church and monastery founded in 1541; church completed c. 1586. The atrium has a spectacular gateway and the medieval-looking church has a strange mix of decorative motifs including low-relief carving with a native feel combined with a classical façade but executed in vertical Gothic proportions and all topped by a Gothic rose window! We will also see the colonial frescoes in convent. Short drive on to **Atlatlahuacan** to see the Augustinian mission church and monastery, another grand fortress-like church (dating from the 1570s) in an isolated location. Compound has an open chapel and frescoes on ceiling of porch. Return to Cuernavaca for Spanish classes and/or tertulia. **B, L**

Day Nine (Sunday, March 21)

Morning classes. Free afternoon in Cuernavaca for last-minute shopping and packing. Evening tertulia and Farewell Cocktail party hosted by the Mayer Center. **B**

Day Ten (Monday, March 22)

Motor coach to Mexico City for our return flight on Continental to Denver via Houston arriving Denver at 9:04 pm.

B=breakfast, **L**=lunch, **D**=dinner

Possible free-time activities on your own in Cuernavaca include:

- Free band concert from the Eiffel-designed gazebo on the main plaza (Sunday and Thursday afternoons 6:00 pm).
- Jardin Botánico with hundreds of orchids growing there and visit to the nearby Museum of Traditional Medicine and Herbology.
- Visits to the markets and the nearby Pyramid of Teopanzolco in the city limits.
- Lunch or dinner on your own at the lovely Las Mananitas Hotel and Restaurant on the shaded terrace overlooking beautiful the garden with strolling peacocks and wandering violinists. Reservations recommended.

NOTE: Portions of the tour costs are underwritten by the Mayer Center.

COST OF THE TOUR: \$2,580.00 per person double occupancy
\$ 750.00 single supplement

Price is subject to change due to currency exchange fluctuations or fuel surcharges. If alterations to the tour are necessary, they will be replaced by equivalent activities.

The cost of the tour includes:

Round trip airfare on Continental Airlines from and to Denver
Motor coach ground transportation within Mexico
All accommodations and meals as per itinerary
Expert, bilingual, government-licensed, step-on guides at the sites of Xochicalco and Malinalco
All entrance fees to museums and archaeological sites as per itinerary
Baggage gratuities and tips to maids
All art and history classes and guest lectures including classroom facilities
Optional, tax-deductible donation to the New World Department for Spanish Colonial acquisitions

Not included:

Insurance coverage
Meals or services not specified in the itinerary
Gratuities to guides or bus drivers
Items of a personal nature
Spanish classes and *tertulias* (partially underwritten by the Mayer Center; see separate registration form)

Payment Schedule

A deposit of \$500.00 per person is required to hold your space.
Final payment is due no later than **December 15th, 2009.**

Cancellation Schedule

Cancellations made after deposit will be assessed a processing fee of \$100.00

Cancellations made after December 16th, 2009 will incur a fee of 50% percent of total tour price

Cancellations made after January 15th, 2010 will incur a fee of 100% percent of the total tour price

We strongly recommend you purchase trip cancellation insurance.

Mail payments to: Trish Tomlinson
New World Department
Denver Art Museum
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Questions? Call Trish @ 720-913-0173